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- ART. VI.—1. *Die Kirche Christi und ihre Zeugen oder die Kirchengeschichte in Biographien.* Durch FRIEDRICH BÖHRINGER. Ersten Bandes dritte Abtheilung. Zurich. 1855. pp. xii., 774. (The Church of Christ and its Witnesses, or Church History in Biographies.)
2. *Thesaurus Hymnologicus sive Hymnorum Canticorum sequentiarum circa Annum M D. Usitatarum Collectio Amplissima.* HERM. ADALBERT DANIEL, Ph. Dr. Halis. In III. Tomis. 1841–1846.
3. *Die heilige Psalmodie oder der psalmodirende König David und die singende Urkirche mit Rücksicht auf den Ambrosianischen und Gregorianischen Gesang.* Von FRIEDRICH ARMKNECHT. Göttingen. 1855. (Sacred Psalmody, or the Psalmist King David and the Song of the Primitive Church, with especial Reference to the Ambrosian and Gregorian Chant.)

A GREAT name asks our attention in this article; and asks it too with a peculiar claim. It stands in honor chief among the four doctors of that Latin Church through which our own Christian birthright comes; it speaks to us in hymns which belong to the heart of Christendom, and which we have heard from our childhood. Let us then address ourselves with a somewhat fraternal feeling to a brief sketch of Ambrose of Milan, earnest to appreciate the sterling Christian humanity that beat beneath the priestly stole of this sternest and bravest of Western bishops in that early age, and to note the elements of power which he has infused into our modern civilization.

He came very abruptly upon the ecclesiastical stage, and our introduction of him may be equally abrupt. Turn to Milan in the year 374. That city, then the residence of the Western Emperors and the capital of Upper Italy, was rent into hostile factions by the election of a bishop in place of the Arian Bishop Auxentius, recently deceased, after an administration of nearly twenty years. Christian people then, as now, had not quite rid themselves of the old Adam in their nature, and the flock that met for the choice of a shepherd

acted so much like wolves, that the governor of the province, who heard of the rising affray, deemed it his duty to interpose. Poor man ! he little thought into what difficulty he was plunging himself by going into that church upon his errand of peace-making. He was a personage well trained to public speaking in the schools of rhetoric and the courts of law, undoubtedly very firm in spirit, very mild in address. He had practised for years at the Roman tribunals, and probably had gained many cases, although in all likelihood he had never before gained more than he argued for. No sooner had he spoken, than a child, one of those little unaccountables who know so much either for good or evil, and who very likely had an intuitive sense of the governor's real worth, cried out, "Ambrose, Bishop." The idea took at once with the entire assembly, and Catholics and Arians shouted with one voice, "Yes, Ambrose must be bishop." The whole company saw directly that the choice of a new man, uncommitted to the old feuds, would rid them of many perplexities, and perhaps took a little mischievous pleasure in disappointing the ambitious heads not very meekly waiting for the expected mitre, and in placing it upon a head whose good sense and inherent dignity spoke for themselves. The governor, who was no other than Ambrose, was apparently more disappointed by his sudden election than the regular candidates could have been by their strange defeat. What should he do ? He was indeed a Christian in his convictions, and one of his family, the sainted Sotheria, had died for the faith under Diocletian. But he was only a catechumen of the Church, and had not yet been baptized. His position in the state was one of great dignity and usefulness, and he had been regularly trained for its duties. The bishop's chair at that stormy period, and in Milan especially, was to a worldling a very dangerous honor, and to a conscientious man a stupendous responsibility. How should the statesman decline the threatened mitre ? His course proved that a large leaven of the stern old Roman still lingered in the breast of the bishop elect. In order to appear too harsh for the office, he had some criminals put to the torture, — not without clear proofs, it is to be hoped, of signal guilt. But in vain the ex-

pedient. Then he undertook to shield himself under the garb of a philosopher, but to as little purpose. He then went so far as to cause some loose characters to be seen about his palace; but still the cry was, "Thy sins be upon us." He fled from the city in despair, and, losing his way, found himself again at the gates, and word of him was sent to the Emperor Valentinian. The Emperor was much pleased to learn that his governor had been chosen bishop, and favored the scheme; but Ambrose still regarded the choice as an outrage upon his liberty, and sought refuge in the country-house of a friend. That friend, however, did not dare to brave the Emperor's displeasure, and thus the reluctant lawyer, who had been told when he was sent to Milan to be governor, that he "must act more like a bishop than a judge," was compelled to be bishop. Providence knew him better than he knew himself, and it was probably not without some presentiment of his undeveloped powers that he consented to accept the mitre.* He was immediately baptized, and eight days afterwards he was consecrated bishop. Sudden as was the transition from the governor to the prelate, the leading rulers of the Church welcomed the accession to their ranks. The illustrious Basil gloried in him as a worthy coadjutor, and found precedents in the Old Testament for the choice. "Thus is it ever," says his most recent biographer, Böhlinger,—"thus is it ever with men of destiny."

Behold Ambrose, now in the prime of life, at the age of thirty-four, placed in the most important position in the Western Church, in the midst of the imperial court, and near enough to the See of Rome to act powerfully upon its policy,

* Peculiar religious impressions of his youth, which secular cares had dimmed, may have revived within him. He had been looked upon as a remarkable child since the day of his infancy, when, as he was sleeping in the court of his father's palace in France, a swarm of bees flew into his mouth and out again, without leaving any other sting than the impulse of honeyed eloquence. And when, not long after his father's death, at which time the boy was about ten years old, the widowed mother with her two sons and daughter returned to Rome, Ambrose was evidently quite a sedate, clerical little personage, somewhat taken by priestly dignities. It is said, that when his sister Marcellina, with another devotee, kissed the hand of the bishop, he held out his hand to be kissed also, hinting that he might one day be bishop.

without being browbeat by its dictation or identified with its internal strifes. His course was very clear before him. He did not begin his work as a theorist curious to analyze the foundations of the faith, or as a reformer, to start new schemes of church discipline, but strictly as a man of business, a practical statesman, who had gone from the civil to the ecclesiastical court. His first question was, "What is the established law of the Church in which I have taken office?" and strict obedience followed the answer. The Nicene Council had settled by authority the orthodoxy of the Athanasian party, and therefore Ambrose would have no Arian bishops concerned in his consecration. The priestly idea of sanctity was identical with celibacy and asceticism; Ambrose accordingly gave to the charities of the Church all his property, except a sufficient provision for his sister Marcellina, who had taken the vow of virginity, and he committed all his temporal affairs to the charge of his brother Satyrus, that he might devote himself wholly to spiritual interests. He ate sparingly, never dined except on Saturdays and Sundays and on the festivals of famous martyrs, never accepted invitations to entertainments, and gave no entertainments except such as were demanded by proper hospitality towards official guests who visited him at Milan. His administration continued twenty-two years, from his accession, in 374, to his death, in 397. Our space is necessarily limited, and as it is not well to crowd a small piece of canvas with many figures, we must be content with three or four sketches of his most prominent acts, which may aid us in our estimate of the works and character of the man, especially with regard to his influence upon European civilization.

Occupying the most important position in the Western Church, Ambrose of course came into contact with the three principal powers that disputed the claims of the Church; we mean, Idolatry, Heresy, and Despotism. His conflicts with these powers continued with greater or less vehemence throughout his whole administration; but we can readily choose the points in which the struggles came severally to their crisis.

It was his crosier apparently that struck down the remnant

of the Roman idolatry. Old Rome had not by any means died out, and among many dignitaries of state, who were quite willing to bow before the rising honors of the Romish See, the annals of the empire under the auspices of Mars and Jupiter were more cherished than the annals of the New Rome, which had exchanged the Temple for the Church, and the Eagle for the Cross. At the accession of Ambrose, Julian had been dead but eleven years; and in his grave not all of the hope of restoring Old Rome was buried. When troubles come upon a nation, it is very popular to appeal to the traditions of antiquity, and to ascribe the evil to the anger of the gods for the desertion of time-honored usages. Paganism was adroitly represented by the man chosen to be its advocate, and by the point upon which issue was joined. The Prefect of Rome, the famous orator Symmachus, drew up the petition to be presented to the imperial court, and shrewdly rested his plea, not upon the restoration of some obnoxious god of the old Pantheon, nor upon the revival of any exploded cruelty of the ancient worship, but simply upon the restoration of the altar of Victory to the Senate-hall. His argument is able, ingenious, and eloquent, remarkably strong in behalf of general toleration, and not without forcible appeals to patriotism and justice. Ambrose addressed a counter-petition to the court,—a document hardly equal to his antagonist's in classic purity of diction, and little consistent with our notions of literary excellence, yet wholly true to his convictions and to the genius of his Church. Symmachus might perhaps have answered the argument to his own satisfaction, but he could not answer the power behind the argument. Victory had deserted the altar of the goddess called by her name, and had ascended the altars of the Church. The very spirit which created that statue had dethroned it. The spirit of Old Rome, instead of dying out, had rather gone up into the New Rome, and there was probably more of the heart of the Roman Senator in Ambrose than in Symmachus, as the prelate claimed for the Cross the universal empire over the world before ruled by the Roman Eagle. The chief of the imperial judges was of the same mind with the fiery bishop. Theodosius threw the weight of his sceptre into the scales, and idolatry fell.

Not far from the time of this signal defeat of Paganism came the crisis in the conflict of Ambrose with heresy. During the first eleven years of his episcopate, he had been constantly employed in resisting the Arian party, which had been for so many years in the ascendant at Milan, and which was now reinforced by the influence of Justina, the mother of the young Emperor Valentinian II., whose tender age threw him entirely into her hands. In the year 385, the Empress commenced the movement to restore to Arianism a foothold in Milan, and in the following year the final crisis came. It is enough to take a single glance at the Bishop during the Easter season. The court had already demanded one of the Catholic churches for the Arian party. Ambrose had resisted the demand at every stage, proving himself quite as much determined to keep down the violence of his own adherents as to baffle his antagonists. Threats and fines had been employed to intimidate the people who favored Ambrose, but with every aggression his spirit rose and conquered. The court remitted their attacks only to rally their arts and forces for the final onslaught. At the Easter season, A. D. 386, he was peremptorily ordered to leave the city if he persisted in refusing to surrender the Portian church and its sacred vessels. His reply was, "Naboth would not surrender the vineyard of his father, and shall I surrender the heritage of Christ?" He quietly pursued his usual duties, went daily to church, and remained unmolested. Some general officers came from the Empress to order him imperatively to quit the city, and go where he pleased. He flatly refused, and all Milan was in uproar at the supposed peril of the brave bishop. Ambrose went into the cathedral, and great multitudes followed him, completely investing the church and the adjacent buildings within the sacred precincts. The soldiers were ordered to allow all to enter, but none to come out. Here, on Palm Sunday, he preached his famous sermon "Against the Surrender of Churches." "Why are you so alarmed?" he began. "Think you that I may surrender the church, and, anxious for my own safety, leave you in the lurch? Hear what I said to the messenger of the Cæsar: I told him, I more fear the Ruler of the universe than the

ruler of this earth. And would any power tear me from this church, it must prevail only over my body, but not over my soul. I am ready: he may do what he pleases in his royal might. I shall know how to suffer as is customary in a priest of God. Why are you therefore troubled? I will never voluntarily give up the right, yet I cannot and will not resist force. I may be able to lament and weep and sigh. This is my weapon and defence against the soldiers, against the Goths. Other weapons the priest has none." "Yet I have a defence in the prayers of the poor. These blind and lame, these crippled and aged, are mightier than the bravest soldiers." In conclusion, he stated the true position of the Emperor towards the Church. "To Cæsar, what is Cæsar's; to God, what is God's. Tribute belongs to Cæsar; who denies this? The Church is God's; therefore it does not belong to Cæsar." For many days and nights this "holy incarceration," as it has been called, continued, and Ambrose, in order to keep up the courage and faith of the congregation, gave out Latin hymns to be sung by the clergy and people alternately, in the manner usual in the East since the third century. He had one auditor who listened with no common ear. The gifted, but prodigal and erratic young Augustine, with his devout mother Monnica, was present, and, although not then a convert, was powerfully impressed by the music and the scene. Even the soldiers caught the enthusiasm, and, as they watched at the church door, joined in the responses of the hymns. The court had no weapons against such resistance, and proposed to leave the question to be settled by arbitrators. Ambrose would not consent for a moment to submit spiritual affairs to a secular or non-ecclesiastical tribunal, and his clergy stood by him to a man. The vantage-ground thus gained he was enabled to keep and enlarge by a bold stroke of enthusiasm and policy. He discovered the bodies of the noted martyrs Gervasius and Protasius, and by his flaming eloquence over their still bleeding wounds he kindled such a fire among the people, that the court yielded the contest, apparently convinced that the prelate's party was the strongest.

In judging between the Arian and the Catholic party in

this contest, we are carefully to distinguish between the worldly policy of the Arian court, and the honest convictions of great numbers of Arian believers who only asked liberty of worship upon broad grounds of toleration.* If Ambrose was right in refusing to quit his flock at the bidding of the throne, and is not to be blamed for not giving up one of the churches under his charge to a sect that had departed from the Catholic creed, we cannot by any means justify him for employing every means in his power short of personal violence to prevent his fellow-men from using their liberty of conscience. He vindicated the destruction of a Jewish synagogue at Callicum, censured Theodosius for obliging the destroyers to rebuild it, and procured the repeal of the just decree of the Emperor to that effect. He had little idea of what is now understood by religious toleration. Yet in his zeal against heresy no stain of blood was upon his hands, and to his honor be it spoken, that he brought down the severest penances of the Church upon the fanatics in Spain who in the name of their faith imbrued their hands in the blood of Priscillian, a Spanish heresiarch, whose fate was by more than a thousand years an anticipation of the horrible death of Servetus, the Spanish physician, at the hands of his Genevan inquisitors.

The position of Ambrose towards the despotism of the throne was no less creditable to his firmness, and more so to his humanity, than his position towards heresy. Over the two Emperors who had the most decided influence during his administration he had great sway. He was the instructor of Gratian and the counsellor of Theodosius. In the latter, the Bishop found a man the most after his own heart, a

* The Arian doctrine has always had advocates excellent in mind and heart, yet those who inherit the name do not always inherit the ancient doctrine. Our Arian friends do not regard the Holy Spirit as a creature, but as the Spirit of God, and they thus escape the ancient error which so separated the soul from direct communion with God. The Athanasian party ran into an error equally great even in the opinion of many Trinitarians, — the error of separating human life from the influence of God's spirit, by branding the domestic relations as carnal, and sacrificing the order of God and nature to ghostly monasticism. If the Arians had the most of the secular tone, the Athanasians had the most of the monkish tone, and the choice is not easy between Justin's pettish domineering from the palace, and Jerome's frantic anathemas from his cell.

man of that peculiarly Spanish temperament which combines with strong passions and a certain dreamy indolence the most intense religious susceptibility. It is to the immortal honor of Ambrose, that he dared to rebuke to his face the prince whose favor was his highest worldly honor and official support. Not for any infraction of ritual, etiquette, or dogmatic creed, but for an act of inhumanity to the people of Thessalonica, the Emperor was treated as an open offender, and refused admission into the church. At the slaughter of seven thousand citizens for an act of insubordination and outrage on the part of a few, a cry of horror rose throughout the churches, and all eyes were turned upon Ambrose. He was not recreant. He withdrew from the city to shun an interview with the Emperor, and by a fearless and powerful letter called him to repentance. He kept his sovereign for eight months in the position of a penitent, and allowed him to enter the Church only after he had made a public confession of his guilt, and pledged himself to delay the execution of all capital sentences until thirty days after the sentence. Where shall we find a nobler rebuke to crime upon a throne than these words?—"Look upon the dust of the maternal earth, from which we all spring and into which we all return. Let not the splendor of the purple blind thee to the weakness of the body which it covers. Thou outragest men, O Cæsar, who are of the same blood as thyself and are thy fellow-servants. One is Lord and King of us all. With what eyes wilt thou behold the temple of the Lord! With what feet tread this holy ground! Depart hence, and do not venture to heap outrage upon outrage." Bowed down with mortification, the Emperor quoted the example of David, whose sin was forgiven. "Indeed, you have imitated David in sin, so imitate him in his penitence." The letter and the speech of Ambrose on this occasion are documents which humanity should never let fall from her keeping. The prophet Nathan stands before us in priestly garb, and again rebukes a David in royal purple.

The dignity of the rebuke given by Ambrose to imperial despotism is brought into bolder relief by his careful regard for the rights of the people. He was willing to expose him-

self to insult to sue for an innocent man's pardon, and took the place of a tribune of the people in opposition to the tyranny of wealth and rank. Enthusiastic high-churchman as he was, he could yet gladly surrender the sacred vessels of the Church to ransom Christians from slavery, thus yielding to mercy treasures that he would not yield to threats. In spite of his love for sacerdotal prerogative, he threw open to the people a part of the worship previously the exclusive property of the Italian priesthood, and by his hymns far more than by his dogmas anticipated the days of Luther, and became the redeemer of the laity from virtual bondage by the quickening power of song. He was as little afraid to rebuke usurpers to the face, as to humble the pride of the legitimate sovereigns. Theodosius, the most orthodox of early Emperors, died in his arms, and forty days afterwards Ambrose gave the funeral oration, which, in spite of its excessive rhetoric, is in its personal bearings the most remarkable of his occasional speeches. He pays an affectionate tribute to the Emperor's character, and dwells at length upon the services of the Christian princes and princesses to Christianity from the beginning. Sacred eloquence has few more touching and exalted passages than the outpouring of personal affection for Theodosius, each sentence beginning with the words, "*Delexi virum illum*," — "I have loved that man," — and the whole ending thus: "Yes, I have loved that man, who wished for me in his last hours, who when on the verge of dissolution was more concerned for the state of the Church than for his own personal danger. He bore a heavy yoke from his youth, since, when he ascended the throne, they who slew his father lay in wait for him, whilst barbarians swarmed on every side. But because here in labor, so there in peace."

In two years the Bishop followed the Emperor; and the empire lost its two strongest rulers. Ambrose died on the night after Good Friday, A. D. 397. Shortly before his death, his biographer, Paulinus, was taking notes of the exposition of the forty-third Psalm from his lips, and looking upon him as he dictated, he saw, as he declares, a luminous appearance as of a shield about his head, and his face was white as snow. The dying man heard angelic voices, and said that Christ

had appeared to him with a smile. The body was laid in state in the cathedral, and on the night before the next Sunday, which was Easter, many persons received baptism. The newly baptized children looked with awe upon the calm and solemn face of the great bishop, and heard from their parents in hushed tones the story of his wisdom and goodness. Of the hymns sung on that day in the service, there were probably some words that were to the people as the living voice of the dead, hallowed words winged for a deathless flight, and sounding still throughout the world.

We will now speak, and as briefly as we can, of the works and the character of Ambrose,—a topic for which there are many fresh and valuable materials that can hardly be touched upon. His works are in two folio volumes in the Benedictine edition,* which is the best, and consist of treatises on theology and ethics, biblical expositions, letters, and discourses. For the sake of distinctness, we will speak of him as a theologian, a moralist, a preacher, and a poet.

As a theologian, Ambrose made no pretensions to originality, but aimed simply to expound and enforce the received doctrine of the Church. In his expositions of Scripture he does not show much of the exact scholarship of Jerome, or the massive thought of Athanasius, or the daring speculation of Augustine, but aims chiefly at educing a directly practical lesson from the text, not afraid to take great liberties with the literal sense, after the allegorizing method of the Orientals, if by so doing he may give point or attractiveness to his statement. As a theologian he was, considering his direct and business-like method, quite Oriental in his tone and spirit, sometimes doing little more than to translate the most noted of the Greek fathers, and rivalling Ori-

* Those who desire to have his masterpieces in a more frugal and convenient form, may be glad to purchase the excellent selection by Dr. R. O. Gilbert, in Gersdorf's *Bibliotheca*. It is in two parts, making together a volume of about four hundred pages, and containing his "*De Officiis Ministrorum*" and "*Hexaëmeron*." For a very instructive statement of his distinctive opinions in his own language, we refer to that invaluable little book recently published in Germany, "*Flores Patrum Latinorum*," by Dr. W. Reithmeier. No apparatus, however, can supply the place of the full Benedictine edition, which affords such ample epistolary and other incidental illustrations of the man and his times.

gen himself in mystical conceits. In doctrine, he was a strong Trinitarian of the Athanasian school; a believer in human depravity, yet not deriving from Adam actual sin, but only the inclination to sin; a champion of free grace through Christ, and of the power of the human will to accept or reject this grace. He held rigidly to the divine prerogative of the priesthood; to the efficacy of baptism, without however regarding salvation as impossible without it; and to the mysterious power of the Holy Communion, to an extent that stops little if any short of Transubstantiation. He believed in the primacy, although he did not assert the infallibility, of Rome, nor sanction the dogma either of the royal authority or the temporal power of the Pope. He believed in a disciplinary state, or a purgatory after death for the sins of the faithful, and a state of endless punishment for the reprobate. He was a great stickler for the pre-eminent sanctity of celibacy, and his earliest work was written in honor of the estate of virginity. The same error runs through his theology, which taints the whole Nicene and Athanasian school, and which should make us receive their dictation with many grains of caution. He had no idea that a married person could attain the highest type of piety, and in his disparagement of woman as the wife, he was led to find a substitute for her in the affections of the devout by magnifying the superangelic honors of the Virgin Mary, thus helping to lay the foundation of that preposterous, but powerful dogma, which has just reached its climax at Rome. No careful student of the emotional literature of Christendom for the last fifteen hundred years will wonder at this decree.*

As a moralist he deserves a higher name than as a theo-

* We have before us two volumes of a new edition of the Latin Hymns of the Middle Ages, from Original Manuscripts. The first volume consists of hymns to God and the Angels, the second of hymns to the Virgin, whilst the third is to be devoted to hymns in honor of the Saints. It is a somewhat remarkable fact, that the space given to the Virgin in this collection exceeds that which is given to God, and equals that which is given to God and all the Angels. This work is edited by F. J. Mone, and is published at Freiburg, 1853, 1854. It is full of curious information, yet far less valuable than Daniel's *Thesaurus*, which we have named at the head of this article, and which is now the classic authority on the subject. Daniel, however, needs revising, for he omits some choice gems of Christian song within his chosen period.

logian; for his book "*De Officiis Ministrorum*," — "*On the Duties of Ministers*," — is probably the first extended ethical work of Christian antiquity. It is evidently modelled upon the plan of the Roman philosopher's "*De Officiis*," and Ambrose, good man, undertook to be the Cicero of Christian morals, with more credit to the purity of his purpose than to the perfection of his style. He is anxious throughout to show the superiority of the Christian morality over the Heathen, first in the elevation of its motive, which he makes out to be the love of God and of eternal life; and, secondly, in its examples, which he draws very copiously, and sometimes with not a little exaggeration, from the Scriptures. All virtues he embraces in wisdom, justice, fortitude, and temperance, and whilst retaining this old classic division, he pours into it the new spirit of faith and love, which is far more convincing and edifying than any of his niceties of definition. His morality is strict and exalted, as far from mere sentimentalism as from utilitarianism; yet it has much of the same leaven that taints his theology. He divides duties into two kinds, the middle and the perfect, — the first for people in general, and the second for the saintly. Perfect virtue is to be found especially in fasting, voluntary poverty, and celibacy. Herein Ambrose loses sight of the essentially evangelical element in Christianity, which regards all duties as of the same worth if performed in the right spirit, and declares all methods and plans of action as equally sacred if consecrated by the same faith and love. The mistake belongs rather to the age than to the man, and the bold thinker Jovinian, who dared to rebuke it, fell with his friends under the Bishop's censure, and was banished from Milan. Let the dogmatists who are fond of quoting the Nicene fathers as final authority upon all matters of belief, remember the ground upon which Jovinian, the Protestant of his time, was denounced. The priesthood which Ambrose headed exiled him for maintaining virtually "that there is but one divine element of life, which all believers share in common; but one fellowship in Christ, which proceeds from faith in him; but one new birth." "Virgins, widows, and married women, who have been once baptized into Christ, have the same merit, if in respect

to works there is otherwise no difference between them." Jovinian may have erred by overlooking the meaning of development and progress in the life of faith, but so far as his cardinal principle is concerned, we side with the exiled heretic against the mighty anathema of Ambrose.

As a preacher, it is not easy to judge Ambrose fairly, so much of the meaning and power of his sermons depended upon the occasion. His preaching was what good preaching generally should be, chiefly pastoral, or addressed to states of mind and events under his own notice. His expositions of Scripture were apparently prepared first for the pulpit, and after serving as homilies were put into treatises. These are often very carefully worded, compactly arranged, and quite interesting alike from their practical point and their allegorical conceits. His strongest efforts were drawn out by great occasions of state, such as his sermon during the watch in the church after Justina's edict of exile against him, and, more than all, his funeral orations over the Emperors Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius. He evidently felt his position as court preacher to the Emperor, and sought to magnify his office by moral dignity as well as by literary care. He is most happy when the spur of the occasion lifts him off his too frequent rhetorical stilts, and moves him to speak out his glowing convictions in the simple language of nature. If the preacher's style, like his dress, was sometimes too stately for a disciple of Christ, it never failed, like his dress, to veil a heart true to Christian affections. We err very much in regarding a fondness for fanciful illustrations and rhetorical beauty as necessary proof of want of earnestness or power. The brave soldier likes to have his good sword decked with quaint arabesques, and his helmet bears blows none the less stoutly because a gay plume waves from its brazen crest. The soldier of the Church Militant may have a similar taste, and may adorn his armor without harm to its strength. However, we are led in truth to say, that, marked as the eloquence of the Bishop frequently was, it hardly explains his power, unless we take into account the man from whom it came, and listen to the acts that speak louder than words.

The man speaks too in the poet as well as in the preacher, and by the impulse that he gave to the element of song in Christian worship he has probably exercised his most enduring influence. He of course did not originate the use of hymns in the worship of the Western Church; for, from the beginning of that Church, the Psalms of David were used in recitative, if not in song. It was Ambrose, however, who more than any other man introduced from the East into the West the use of rhythmic hymns, and called the congregation to join the clergy of the choir in the singing. He was at once a composer of hymns and the head of a new movement to popularize that part of worship in the Western Church. Hilary had written hymns before him, but the great enterprise of establishing them in the churches belongs to Ambrose. The manner of singing and the subject-matter are both worthy of note. In the West the services of the Church had been more exclusively in the hands of the clergy than in the East, where, at least from the middle of the third century, the congregation had joined with the ministers in song. Rome afterwards resumed her exclusive policy, and Gregory the Great, whilst too stern to favor the Greek measure introduced by Ambrose, not only revived the ancient ecclesiastical chant, but sought to restore the singing to the charge of the clergy, a restriction not by any means required by the quality of the music. In our own day, our habit of limiting the musical part of worship to a separate choir is a repetition of the Romish exclusiveness, which Ambrose tried to remove. Now musical pretension claims the monopoly once claimed by clerical sanctity, and our modern choirs, by their artistic modulations, lord it over the devotion of the congregations as proudly as the old priests kept the people in awe by their litanies and genuflexions. When will a new Ambrose arise to educate the people to their rightful duty, and to save our churches from the ungodly pirouetting of the lips that is called by the name of worship? We must say a few words on this question before we close.

The music of the rhythmic hymns was apparently derived from the Greeks, and was of a very simple kind. The hymns of Ambrose are written in a cheerful measure, the iambic di-

meter, more lively than the Pindaric odes, and but little less so than the Anacreontic songs; as, for example, in the famous hymn to Christ:—

“ Splendor paternæ gloriæ,
De luce lucem proferens,
Lux lucis et fons luminis,
Diem dies illuminans.”

As to musical execution, Ambrose used the scale of four notes only, the tetrachord, instead of our octave, and knew nothing of harmony or counterpoint. His hymns were sung in unison, and, as far as can be learned, with no more variety than the small compass of four tunes, the Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, and Mixt-Lydian. It is not easy to ascertain exactly what these tunes were, and, after trying to study the nature of the Ambrosian chant somewhat thoroughly with the splendid apparatus in the Astor Library, we gave it up in despair, on finding that two of the most learned musical scholars of Italy and Germany, who had ransacked all the noted repositories of manuscripts and books on music, had come to the conclusion that nothing definite could be learned. The difficulty probably arises from expecting a too definite and scientific description of a style of music which existed before our modern notation was invented. We may form a tolerable conjecture as to its character from a few of the old German tunes that the Reformation caught from tradition, such as the popular *Te Deum*, “*Herr Gott, dich loben wir*,” which probably dates as far back as the fourth century. The ancient Greek music gives *Armknacht* the basis for some critical conjectures as to the four tunes of Ambrose. What is generally called the Ambrosian chant is probably of later origin, and more elaborate. We know very little more about his music than that it was simple and melodious, fitted to enlist the vows and the affections of a promiscuous congregation, and a great improvement upon the heavy, prosaic recitative before in vogue. We must distinguish between the Ambrosian hymns, which were melodious verse without rhyme, and, on the one hand, the Gregorian chants, which were musical recitatives of Scripture sentences without measured verse, and, on the other hand, the Leonine verses, such as the “*Dies*

Iræ" and the "Stabat Mater," which are in rhyme. Both the Ambrosian and the Gregorian chants, which are so thoroughly discussed in the little work of Armknecht, who considers the former as derived from the Greeks and the latter from the Hebrews, coincided in their fitness for popular use, and, in comparison with our current modern music, they were distinguished by great simplicity. The mission of Ambrose may be compared to that of the Wesleys, who introduced cheerful strains of music into the Church, and turned many of the world's melodies against the world's sway. Ambrose, like the Wesleys, opened the lips of the people in sacred song, and, in both cases, probably as many converts were sung into the Church as were preached in. The followers of the Wesleys, as of Ambrose, went too far, no doubt, in secularizing church music, and the recent disposition in England and America to restore the grave and simple style of the old Gregorian chant, with the use of the Psalms of David, enables us, in some degree, to understand the reform which Gregory introduced by his return to the ancient psalms, with improved notation and more thorough musical instruction.

The subject-matter of Ambrose's hymns is in harmony with the mode of singing. They do not aim at profound thoughts or elaborate fancies, but present the plain facts of Christianity, and the most obvious religious duties and affections, in language so simple, compact, pointed, and graphic, as to be understood and felt at once. The hymns on the great festivals are, of course, full of the church doctrines and ritual of the author's faith, whilst those that celebrate the attributes of God, or consecrate the morning and the evening hours, are, in the main, of a character to touch all Christian hearts. What can be more simple and devout than his morning hymn to the Creator, "Eterne rerum Conditor," translated by Edward Caswall, somewhat freely, indeed, but in the metre of the original? Here is a specimen of it, which calls the soul to worship at the crowing of the cock, that old-fashioned prayer-bell:—

"Forthwith at this, the darkness still
Retreats before the star of morn,

And from their busy schemes of ill,
The vagrant crews of night return.

“ Arise ye, then, with one accord,
Nor longer wrapt in slumber lie;
The cock rebukes all who their Lord
By sloth neglect, by sin deny.

“ Jesus ! look on us when we fall ;
One momentary glance of thine
Can from her guilt the soul recall,
To tears of penitence divine.

“ Awake us from false sleep profound,
And through our senses pour thy light ;
Be thy blest name the first we sound
At early dawn, the last at night.”

There is clearly a very genial air in this strain, that must have contrasted strongly with the grave tone of the old prose chants, and have tempted every tongue to join in the song. The Christian Church loses power by parting with this genial spirit, and it is an interesting fact that the Wesleyan hymns which best retain it, and still keep due devotional dignity, have now a permanent place among the sacred lyrics of every sect. Public worship will gain much in power when the spirit of such stirring hymns is breathed in simple music in which the congregation generally can join, whilst the more difficult and ornate compositions, if retained in our churches at all, are intrusted to a choir of professional musicians. We look with great interest upon the movement now in progress in favor of plain-song and congregational singing. The most earnest portion of the Episcopal Church, with all its conservatism, has committed itself to this movement, and has added several manuals to the congregational singing-books now multiplying in America. We shall be glad to have the shades of Ambrose and Gregory both return to us in the rhythmic hymns and Scripture chants which they have connected with music so simple and devotional, so true to the various chords of Christian faith and sympathy.

As many as ninety hymns come to us in Daniel's collection marked with the name of Ambrose as author or master,

although the careful Benedictine editors are not willing to claim more than twelve for him on absolute authority. This seems a small contribution to that form of sacred poetry, when we think that in the German language alone there are now numbered eighty thousand hymns, and that two writers, Schmolk and Hiller, have composed each more than a thousand of these. But quantity is not quality, and when it is remembered that the lyric heart of Luther caught most of its fire from Ambrose, whose chief hymns were translated into household words of Protestant piety, the Christian Muse of Germany lays her fairest olive-branch at the feet of Luther's great precursor in song.

As in his preaching, so in his poems, Ambrose embodied his own character, and the spirit of the man was the chief part of the matter. If in his preaching he brought out the strength of his nature on the spur of great occasions, in his poems he expressed the tenderness of his nature at the touch of devotion and sympathy. We have small space to devote to a portraiture of his character, and perhaps his life and works, even thus imperfectly described, give a better idea of it than any labored analysis.

He was manifestly not an original thinker, although gifted with strong understanding and a large and delicate comprehension. He had great talents for business, and evidently carried a statesman's method into the official details of his ministry. In fact, his age demanded of him executive energy rather than speculative depth. Athanasius, who died the year before Ambrose's ordination, had fought in the intellectual arena the great battle of orthodoxy for doctrine, and a man was wanted to carry its standard bravely into the field of church discipline. Augustine was just coming upon the stage, and his contest for irresistible grace and Divine decrees had not begun. Ambrose was admirably fitted for his position as a working bishop, in extending and guarding the strong-holds of the Church. He abounded in that rare sagacity which sees the point of a wide range of particulars, and marshals the lesser matters in their due perspective about the chief issue. He had not the highest qualities of the philosopher or the poet, neither the speculative reason of Origen, the

powerful logic of Athanasius, nor the keen and flaming eloquence of Augustine. Yet he was essentially an idealist in his thought and feeling; and nothing delighted him more than to interpret and adorn the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church with all the rich Orientalisms of speculation and fancy in which his favorite authors abounded, and which he could appreciate more easily than he could originate them.

Notwithstanding his stern command and ascetic piety, his affections were tender and constant. It is difficult, indeed, to learn from his contemporaries exactly what his social traits were, for the style of biography, like that of ecclesiastical paintings, was in very high colors,—so fond of sky-blue, vermilion, and gold, as to neglect such every-day matters as flesh-color and wrinkles, gray hair and small talk. Some chance words, dropped here and there, give us inklings of a vein of humor in the stern ascetic. As was usual with the devotees of that age, the troubles of married life were a not unfrequent subject of his sarcasm; and of his three standing rules, the first was, never to make a match for anybody's marriage; the second, never to persuade a man to be a soldier; and the third, never to accept invitations to feasts. He was evidently very courteous in manners,—a Christian gentleman, somewhat of the school of Fénelon. It is said of him, that, when once he was attacked by a woman who was baffled in her purpose of pulling him down to be mobbed by her companions in fanaticism, she died from the excitement occasioned by his rebuke; and yet the courtly bishop so far subdued his resentment as to attend her funeral, not, perhaps, unwilling to have her buried. A man's letters, if fairly reported, show pretty well what he is, and the printed epistles of Ambrose give the idea that he was a kindly and obliging man, yet so absorbed with public affairs as to live far more for official than private relations. His tenderness to his own family is expressed, in a public discourse on his brother's death, in a manner so excessive and rhetorical as to challenge the utmost charity of our taste, whilst his letters to his sister Marcellina answer her troubled dreams and anxious inquiries on his account by a long rehearsal of his difficulties with the Arians, and a far-fetched allegorical disquisition on the penitent

woman's kissing the feet of Jesus, and the difference between the Church, which repeats the kiss, and the Synagogue, which has no kiss for Christ. We might think less of this tone towards his relatives, were it not for his extreme cordiality to mere official correspondents. We cannot but wish that we had a few words of tender and personal devotedness to his sister and brother in the series of epistles that contains one to Theodosius, in which the Bishop tells the Emperor that he took the last letter from him to church, laid it upon the altar, and held it in his hand during the consecration of the host. Yet to him Theodosius was not merely a person, but the representative of the whole empire, and the piety embodied in that letter seemed, undoubtedly, to Ambrose as the consecration of the kingdoms of the world on the altar of God and his Christ.

His power of action has already been sufficiently shown by his life, and we need only say, that his mighty will was ever quickened and steadied by a profound faith. Thus he stands among those heroes of history, those nobles of God's own court, who have renewed their strength by divine grace, and wrought out eternal life from the imperishable tissue woven by faith and good works. Honor to Ambrose for this union, we say, sturdy Protestants as we are. The devout of all times owe him the brother's hand, and the stout Puritan Independent may find under his Catholic vestments a heart that answers bravely and tenderly to his own sense of God's grace and man's duty.

The dust of the great Bishop rests in the church at Milan that bears his name, and the library founded after a thousand years by his illustrious successor, Borromeo, commemorates his glory. We of the West may, without surrendering our freedom or fidelity, add our stone to his mausoleum. Honor to the man who stands in history foremost of the leaders of the Church in vindicating the supreme law of God against the encroachments of despotism, and, by his doctrine of pacific nonconformity to tyranny, teaches us a lesson which every age should learn, no matter whether the tyrant is one or many, a throne or a senate, aristocrat or democrat.

Honor to the man who, foremost among the fathers of

Western Christendom, enlisted the influence of music in soothing the passions and inflaming the faith and zeal of the people. He stands at the head of an illustrious list, supported on either hand by Hilary and Prudentius, followed by Sedulius, Fortunatus, Gregory, Bernhard, Hildebert, Adam St. Victor, Aquinas, Celano, and their peers; and in due time by a mighty host nearer our own hearts, Luther, Gerhard, Milton, Herbert, Watts, Doddridge, Wesley, Cowper, Heber, Montgomery, and all the sweet singers of our own Israel. The future of humanity is to swell into mightier volume the strains that Ambrose began. By his melody, the walls of New Rome rose from above the ruins of Old Rome. Who will deny that God has in store for mankind bards, who shall raise the walls of the new Christendom from the ruins or from the foundations of the old, and who shall call the nations to a union of faith and industry that shall set humanity itself to music, and, from the chaos that now prevails, educe the order of a divine kingdom? As that day draws near, the best of the old hymns will be sung with profounder mind and more flaming heart. The God whom Ambrose invoked will give new ear to his well-known prayer, —

“ O Thou, the Father’s image blest !
 Who callest forth the morning ray ;
 O Thou eternal light of light,
 And inexhaustive fount of day !

“ True Sun ! upon our souls arise,
 Shining in beauty evermore ;
 And through each hour the quickening beam
 Of the Eternal Spirit pour.”

It is very certain that Divine Providence ranks music among the powerful means that are to check and elevate the too exclusive utilitarianism of our day. Parallel with the progress of that science which claims to be the measure of all exactness, mathematics, we trace the progress of another science, which is the voice of Beauty distinctly articulating herself. Mathematics and music, so unlike in their apparent mission, — the one concentrating and the other relaxing the faculties, the

one leading the utilities, the other leading the graces of society, — both rest upon the sure principles of exact science, and both combine to prepare the great future of humanity. The Lord of the Ages who sent forth Newton to record the harmonies of the heavens in the mathematics of the “*Principia*,” sent forth Haydn to sing those harmonies in the music of the “*Creation*.” The same year that called the mathematician, La Place, to the world beyond the measure of his geometry, summoned Beethoven to the glories which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard. He who is Infinite Loveliness and Almighty Power has in store for humanity a new day of reconciliation between the spirit of beauty and of strength. When the morning stars sang together, their song was the music of those sublime forces in measured march, and the calculus and the psalter are but partial versions of that song. The calculus and the psalter, in all their endless applications, are to lead mankind to a deeper study of the divine order, and to subdue earth’s discord to heaven’s blessed harmony.

ART. VII. — *Art-Hints. Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting.* By JAMES JACKSON JARVES, Author of “*History of the Sandwich Islands*,” “*Parisian Sights and French Principles*,” Member of the American Oriental Society, etc., etc. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1855.

PAINTING and Sculpture, Eloquence and Poetry, Music and the higher forms of Architecture, in all ages, may be reckoned among the most wonderful and uplifting of all the manifestations permitted on earth to the sons of men. Appealing to the senses, and not to the reason, they are felt where they are not understood. Being all children of one parentage, their relationship to a common Father is acknowledged by the great multitude. Even the rudest of our race delight in “barbaric pearl and gold,” in the “barbarian gong” and the clattering war-drum; and all mankind are, by nature, judges of painting and sculpture, of eloquence and music,